

TUESDAY MORNING JAN 7 1881

ABUSES OF THE SPILLS SYSTEM

In those who argue that any general amendment of the civil service is unworkable under present forms of government, and those who oppose such reform because they want a change at the polls or rather than cult to work any plan of improvement ahead. On the one hand we have an argument which may be stated thus: The executive in a republic is necessarily the chief of a party's republican government in the present constituted in human nature is party government. The constitution of the American executive puts it in the power of the party chief to turn out all persons in the civil service who are not of his party, and fill their places with his own partisans. The constitution of human nature impels him to do this and implies all the active members of his party demand that he shall do it. Heron is the predominating cause of the spoils system. It is only vain to hope for an efficient and enduring reform of the civil service until this predominating cause is removed. It is easy enough to propose, but absolutely impossible to establish and maintain a civil service on a more permanent tenure than the present so long as the power of removal and appointment is constitutionally lodged in the hands of a party chief, unless the constitution of human nature shall be changed.

The view of the case as entertained by a pessimist, is that hopeless the premises of a false philosophy to a hopeless conclusion is taken up with delight by those who make the pursuit of spoils a profession, and those last tell us, in substance, that one who holds office are the servants of the people and are subject to such changes as the people or a majority may demand; that if you do away with this idea you change our form of government, and that the evils of our present system are not to be spoken of in comparison with those of an official ruling class which would inevitably ensue if the ideas of the so-called civil service reformers were carried out.

Both parts of this argument rest on erroneous premises. The first part is, indeed, state correctly the predominating cause of the spoils disease. But it is not impossible to apply the correction without first changing the constitution of the executive—that is to say, without first taking away from the executive his present constitutional powers. For the first forty years under the constitution we had nothing of this abuse, though the executive had from the first the same powers he possesses now. The first essential step is to create a proper public sentiment against the spoils system. The public mind and conscience have been debauched by the ghosts of fifty years. But they can again be restored to healthy conditions, till it will be come over again to outgrow to make the public service by converting it into personal and partisan spoil as it was in the time of the early presidents. And they are poor observers of the course of public sentiment who are unable to perceive a popular tendency in that direction now. A proper opposition to the spoils system has been vastly strengthened by the course of the present administration, and no one doubts that it will be further strengthened by the next one. It is folly to say that the evil is incurable. Exposure of wrong and pernicious methods, and constant protest against them, always open a way to their removal or amendment.

Even more erroneous is the assumption that any radical change of this system would require a change of form of government. The idea that it is necessary to maintain a republican government that a system is kept up which places all the avenues to public employment in control of a "boss" politicians in each state, indicates a rather remarkable conception of the nature of republican government. Such a system established and maintained an office-jobbing oligarchy. The boss politician is a professional office-hopper, and he uses the powers placed at his command to advance his own schemes, to reward his friends and to punish his enemies. Conventions, nominations, also state and local appointments are controlled under this system in the interest of the several politicians of local jurisdiction, who in many cases set up their own personal whims as the interests of their party, and employ their followers as whipping-post. This is not popular government, but a burlesque on popular government. It makes officeholders not the servants of the people, but masters of the people and servants of the "boss." But it is said that no change is practicable without changing our form of government. Look at the English civil service. Party government prevails in Great Britain, fully as in the United States, and even more fully, since the government there is immediately changed by an election, while we it takes a long time to effect such change after an election as held. Hence, as Great Britain has reorganized and reformed her civil service, we have proof from her experience that there is nothing in party government incompatible with the change which is demanded in the United States.

This subject is constantly forcing itself more and more on public attention. Many of the abuses of the spoils system as formerly practiced have been set off under President Hayes, and the republican party must continue this fight, or public opinion will deal with it again as severely as it did a few years ago when the system of abuses was at its height. It was possible to get on this subject, more than anyone else, that brought the republican party to the narrow corner for existence to which it has been subjected since 1873.

The speech of the British queen, reported today, deals in generalities, as is natural in such addresses. Much of it is devoted to the Irish question, and there is a concession to the position of Irish demands in the recommendation of "effective efforts for giving to a larger proportion of the people, by purchase, a permanent proprietary interest in the soil." This means that the laws which prohibit free trade in land should be modified or abolished. Removal of these restrictions would take away the whole just cause of complaint. Of course there will be agitators still, but they would have small ground to stand on.

Ex-Senator Sprague continues as his lawyer to win the suit for his wife before the divorce trial commences. The fair verdict of honorable men will be that any woman ought to be released from a man like him. When he says he "shall leave no stone unturned to bring his wife a whole life out, it merely shows that a great injustice was done the world when he was permitted to marry. Such unmitigated meanness ought to furnish ample ground for appeal. To chain a gifted woman to such a narrow, mean and vindictive fool as a husband, no code of morals ought to be able to justify.

The Tians are at it in Nevada, and the descriptions of their struggles furnish several contributions to political literature. It is a "com fight" in which "each clash," with promise of victory to the man who has "the biggest body in sight." This is the most disgraceful scene of the kind ever witnessed in our politics. Since it is enacted in the thought of the whole country to ought to furnish a continual argument for refusing to tolerate the dirty corrupt life a community, longer as a state. A way ought to be found of reducing Nevada to a territorial condition or making it a county of California.

In all the history of railroad law nothing like the extraordinary success of the law of the Northern Pacific has ever before been reported. The reader is referred to dispatches of to-day.

A NEW PROJECT

The Sacramento Record Union which is an deserved to speak with knowledge on all that concerns it in California railroads and those who oppose such reform because they want a change at the polls or rather than cult to work any plan of improvement ahead. On the one hand we have an argument which may be stated thus: The executive in a republic is necessarily the chief of a party's republican government in the present constituted in human nature is party government. The constitution of the American executive puts it in the power of the party chief to turn out all persons in the civil service who are not of his party, and fill their places with his own partisans. The constitution of human nature impels him to do this and implies all the active members of his party demand that he shall do it. Heron is the predominating cause of the spoils system. It is only vain to hope for an efficient and enduring reform of the civil service until this predominating cause is removed. Another leading consideration against us is that of time. It requires from 180 to 100 days to deliver a car to a ship at San Francisco. After the Southern Pacific railway and the whole coast of the Pacific states will be delivered at an Atlantic port in front of us. We know that there is that terrible difficulty in getting the Pacific coast roads built, and the most difficult Christian country will be in the interior two months. I think I have never read one in the past year that has not been built by the time of the first of October. Well, the article is based on the principle that because the Pacific coast will be delivered at an Atlantic port in front of us, we can't do anything about it. We know that there is that terrible difficulty in getting the Pacific coast roads built, and the most difficult Christian country will be in the interior two months. I think I have never read one in the past year that has not been built by the time of the first of October. 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